Tender for 3G component

465. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether BSNL has been asked to review tender for 3G component;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether there has been any objection especially from BSNL employees?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) Sir, since the Government is yet to announce spectrum policy for 3G services, Board of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) had taken a review of the GSM tender with the possibility to restrict order to 2G component. BSNL employees had also raised their concern against possible restriction of order on 3G component and requested for immediate release of purchase order. However, based on the legal opinion, BSNL Board has decided to maintain the provision of the tender including 3G component.

Arrears due to MTNL and BSNL

466. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of arrears due to MTNL and BSNL; and

(b) the action taken to recover the dues?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEKL AHMAD): (a) The amount of outstanding arrears due to BSNL as on 1.1.2007 is as follows:

(i)	Landline connections	Rs. 3628.57 crores
(ii)	Cellular Mobile Telephones	Rs. 545.71 crores
	TOTAL:	Rs. 4174.28 crores

The outstanding arrears are only 1.59% and 7.50% of total billed amount for landline and cellular mobile telephone respectively.

The amount of outstanding arrears due to MTNL as on 30.06.2007 is as follows:

(i)	Basic Services	Rs. 1065.29 crores
(ii)	Cellular Mobile Telephones	Rs. 163.38 crores
	TOTAL:	Rs. 1228.67 crores

The outstanding arrears of MTNL has reduced from Rs. 1303.54 crores (as on 30.06.2006) to Rs. 1228.67 crores (as on 30.06.2007).

(b) Action taken to recover the dues are given in Statement-I and II (*See* below).

Statement-I

Actions taken by BSNL in order to recover/minimize the outstanding dues/arrears

- Instructions to Circles to ensure timely issue of telephone bills and to effect disconnection of telephones for non-payment promptly have been issued and are being re-iterated periodically. 35 days time limit for disconnection (25 days in case of cellular mobile telephones) due to non-payment has been fixed.
- Every year targets for liquidation of outstanding dues for different billing periods for each Circle/Metro District are fixed and performance thereof is reviewed regularly.
- The progress of Circles is reviewed regularly and the poor performer circles are addressed by CMD, BSNL, Dir. (F) and DDG (TRF).
- Instructions have been issued to Circles for separate monitoring of Billing and Collections of High Callers who contribute a major share of revenue for the company.
- As per instructions of Corporate Office, the telephones disconnected due to non-payment are permanently closed after 3 months from the date of disconnection. If outstanding can be adjusted against deposits available, if any, it is adjusted and the balance deposit is refunded to the customer. If outstanding is more than the deposit, the balance amount after adjusting deposit is transferred to pursuit cell for recovery. Legal notice is given to the defaulters and outstanding pursuit cell pursues the defaulter cases.
- Instructions have been issued to the Circles to hold meeting of Liquidation Boards and High Power Committees on time and at regular intervals for review of defaulter cases to recommend legal action for recovery of dues or for write off of such dues, which seem to be irrecoverable.
- Civil suits are also being filed against defaulters, if outstanding amount is more than Rs. 25,000.
- The State Governments have been requested to amend their respective land revenue acts so that the defaulted Telephone dues of BSNL can be recovered as land revenue arrears.
- Heads of Circles have been authorized to Appoint Private Recovery agents on commission basis to assist BSNL in recovery of outstanding revenue. Circles have also been asked to utilize the services of State Government Departments in recovery of outstanding dues.
- Discount scheme for defaulters has also been introduced to lure them to clear the dues outstanding against them.

Statement-II

Actions taken by MTNL to recover/minimize the outstanding dues

- Strong monitoring of outstanding dues at the Corporate level and at the Unit level. High targets were set and the units were constantly placed on their toes to achieve them.

- In respect of old outstanding dues relating to period up to 31.3.2006 separate targets were set, old outstanding dues of Rs. 1120.80 crores, were reduced by Rs. 222.20 crores to Rs. 898.59 crores. Also, private recovery agents were employed for making recoveries and were able to make some recoveries of about Rs. 5 crores.

- A Revenue Assurance Programme has also been implemented in MTNL wherein efforts are being made to ensure that maximum revenue Billing and Revenue Realization takes place to further reduce the outstanding dues.

- Convergent Billing System is being introduced for achieving further control on realization of outstanding.

- Automated telephonic reminders to subscribers who default in making payments of their bills.

- Further action of disconnection of the telephone including disconnection of other working connection of the subscribers is also initiated in case payment is not received.

- Legal notices are also served to those subscribers who despite the reminders fail to make the payments of the telephone bills.

- In the events of the above efforts not yielding results, recovery suits are filed in the court of law wherever possible.

Availability of spectrum

467. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in all the twenty three telecom circles, there is no cap on the service providers;

(b) if so, the number of average service providers in each circle;

(c) whether it is also a fact that one of the reasons for bad services in a circle is more number of service providers and less availability of spectrum;

(d) if so, whether the issue has been referred to TRAI; and

(e) if so, the recommendations made by TRAI in this respect?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There are 5-8 Telecom Access service providers in each telecom service area.

(c) Increase in number of service providers for wireless and wire line access telecom services has significantly increased the demand on the limited spectrum resource for wireless access.

According to these Service Providers, shortage of spectrum is a key factor for degradation to performance and quality of service for wireless access.